

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PILOT PROGRAM

FAQ

State law requires that jurisdictions provide their “fair share” of regional housing needs. Local governments and Councils of Government (COGs) are charged with determining existing and future need, together with the California Department of Housing and Community Development. SCAG prepares the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) for the six-county territory it represents. The last assessment covered the period January 1998 through June 2005.

The SCAG Regional Council approved a Pilot Program that would modify existing law and streamline the RHNA process.

1. When is the next RHNA due and what period will it cover?

It is due June 30, 2007, covering the period 2008 through 2014.

2. What about housing that has been built since the end of the last RHNA cycle? Will cities be “credited” for housing built between the last cycle and the start of the new one?

Yes, local jurisdictions will be able to take “credits” for actual construction activities in the 3-year gap period (2005-2008) that are above the growth forecasted for that period, and apply those credits to the housing needs forecasted for the period between 2008 and 2014.

3. How can cities that are built-out be required to provide more housing when land is not available? There is little support for rezoning vital commercial/industrial lands deemed critical to continued economic viability.

Cities are responsible for creating opportunities to meet their housing needs. There are various tools to meet these requirements, including, but not

limited to, the conversion of existing units or rezoning.

4. How will an over-concentration of low-income housing be avoided?

Neither existing law nor the Pilot Program allow the further concentration of lower income households in jurisdictions that house

more than their “fair share.” The Regional Council will establish a policy to decrease new allocated housing need in areas that already have a high concentration.

5. Will the process allow the use of local zoning and land ordinances as the basis of local input? Combining housing and transportation forecasts seems to place restrictions on local jurisdictions.

Transportation, housing, and employment forecasts for the future rely heavily on local



planning as expressed in General Plans, Capital Improvement Programs, and actual growth trends in the city, county, and region.

6. Why are we tying the RHNA process together with the RTP process? RHNA is a needs-based program while the RTP is land-use based.

The Pilot Program ensures an integrated long-range growth forecast. It links together housing, transportation, and air quality planning, allowing jurisdictions to plan for transportation and housing simultaneously and plan more efficiently for future growth. Past practices in which cities created one forecast for transportation and one for housing will be avoided.

7. Does the integrated approach for our 2007 growth forecast process change the Compass Blueprint from a voluntary program to a mandatory one?

No, it is a regional policy that the Compass Program remains a voluntary program. Implementation of the Compass Blueprint focuses on providing planning tools and consulting services to local governments that voluntarily apply for assistance. The services offered are aimed at assisting cities and counties implement local plans and policies that are consistent with regional goals.

8. How will the work to complete the RHNA process be funded?

The Commission on State Mandates has ruled that COGs are not eligible to seek reimbursement. Attempts to pass a state budget appropriation have failed, although efforts are still underway to receive some form of state funding in addition to California Blueprint funds.

Federal transportation funds can only be used for the growth forecast portion of the process. To finance funding shortfalls, SCAG can access its General Fund and/or assess fees. SCAG's Regional Council is opposed to a fee assessment.

9. Why does the Pilot Program seek to limit the RHNA appeals process to one appeal?

The Pilot Program includes a streamlined appeals process that is better suited to a complex multi-county region than the existing state law. The existing law permitted an endless round of appeals in which jurisdictions would be unable to complete their housing requirements in time. Permitting only one round of appeals allows for a comprehensive regional review of appeals based on the AB 2158 factors and allows jurisdictions to progress towards their housing goals in a streamlined and efficient manner.

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